

National Plant Materials Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Lockeford, CA Plant Materials Center
April 24-25, 2003

In Attendance:

Members:

Leonard Jordan, State Conservationist, Georgia (Co-Chairman)
Niles Glasgow, State Conservationist, Florida, (Co-Chairman)
Rich Sims, State Conservationist, Idaho
Humberto Hernandez, Regional Conservationist, South Central
Jim Briggs, Assistant State Conservationist, Phoenix, AZ (attending for Don Gohmert)

Others:

Merlin Bartz, Special Assistant, USDA, Natural Resources & Environment, Washington D.C.
Gayle Norman, Policy Analyst, NRCS, Strategic Natural Resource Issues, Washington D.C.
John Hovanesian, CNPS, Inc., Milton, FL
Richard White, National Program Leader, Plant Materials, Washington D.C.
John Englert, PMC Manager/Acting PM Information Coordinator, Beltsville, MD
Jody Holzworth, Plant Materials Public Affairs Specialist, Boise, ID
Diane Holcomb, State Resource Conservationist, Davis, CA
Diane Blohm, Administrative Assistant, Davis, CA
Dave Dyer, PMC Manager, Lockeford, CA

The meeting was chaired by Leonard Jordan

Important Dates:

May 2, 2003 – Provide comments on PM Training Session to Jim Briggs
May 15, 2002 – Provide comments on PM brochure and Farm Bill flyer to Jody Holzworth
July 9-11, 2003 – Next meeting to be held at NYPMC ending at noon on the 11th; Chaired by Niles Glasgow.

Review of Action Items from previous meetings

Name	Action Item Description	Status
Tom Jewett	Prepare the fact sheet that identifies the role of plant materials relative to 2002 Farm Bill.	This is in progress; NPMC will contact Jewett through Dwight Tober to consolidate this effort. 11/13/02 – No progress from ND, Jody Holzworth will be working on something to be completed in April 2003.
Rick White and John Englert	Produce PMC 5-year performance tables and send to State Conservationists with plant material centers.	DONE - 4/16/03
Rick White	Make STCs aware of PMC performance goals and progress being made towards goals at end of 2 nd Q.	DONE - 4/16/03

Name	Action Item Description	Status
Rick White	Need to get information pulled together now for FY05 OMB performance assessment of PMCs	OMB-PART process is underway and progress is being made
Rick White	The request for annual performance goals should be sent to STCs with a cc: to PMCs in the future.	Future item – September 2003
Niles Glasgow & Leonard Jordan	Follow-up with Larry Clark on sending a letter to Mark Rey regarding promoting a government PM program.	Merlin Bartz attended 4/25/03 Advisory Meeting and this was discussed. The hope is that Merlin brings this back to Mark Rey. Merlin suggests that additional discussions of this type might help with this effort.
John McLain and John Hovanesian	Send a letter to Mark Rey as follow-up to previous meetings, value of PMCs, status of PMCs, and value of looking at other agencies contributing to current PM program.	Item dropped as other mechanisms are being looked at.
Rick White	Prepare an SF-52 to advertise for the 2 Regional Coordinator positions and submit through channels.	DONE - Is being taken care of per Diane Gelburd 4/2/03
Leonard Jordan	Follow up with Humberto Hernandez to get him to participate on the PM Advisory Committee	DONE – Humberto attending at April 2003 meeting
Rick White & John Englert	prepare letter to send to STCs with copy to PMCs/PMSs asking for contacts and supporters for the PMC program	Not done, brought forward
Rick White	Send memo out to all PM staff letting them know that if deadlines for information are not met the STC will be contacted directly.	Not done, brought forward
Don Gohmert & John McLain	Recommend to Chief that NRCS finalize an invasive species policy and emphasize the role of PM to address initiatives.	DONE – sent to Chief 2/10/03
John Englert, Jody Holzworth, others	Revise Budget Initiatives with comments from NPMAC by mid February and have a through review by others.	Nothing done since last meeting but initiatives are being handled differently and PM has been addressed in new format
John Englert & Jody Holzworth	Prepare Farm Bill fact sheet for internal NRCS use to describe how PM can help FOs work on Farm Bill.	Draft completed for discussion
Rick White & John Englert	Make changes to existing NACD legislative meeting flyer. Prepare a couple of sound bytes and potential answers for the Chief. Rick surface this	DONE 3/14/03

Name	Action Item Description	Status
	up through Diane and Larry.	
Don Gohmert	Set up a meeting with the Chief at the NACD meeting in February to discuss the national PM Training Conference	DONE – covered at NACD meeting 2/5/03

Discussion on meeting agenda items:

Biofuels-Biomass Discussion (group)

- 1) Requirements of grant proposal (Glasgow)
 - a) Deadline is May 16 for 2003 season
 - b) 20% of funds must be come from non-Federal sources
 - c) promotes partnerships between federal and non-federal groups
 - d) several areas of the grant outline can be addressed by PM
 - i) alternative biomass cropping systems
 - ii) residue management
 - iii) sustainable cropping for biomass products
 - iv) improving marginal lands through biomass and sustainable systems
- 2) Decision – we are too late to do much for the 2003 proposal season. A team will be put together to being scoping a process for preparing a proposal for the 2004 season.
- 3) Action Item – Niles Glasgow/Leonard Jordan prepare letter to Ron Williams to request Dave Burgdorf take lead on Biomass proposal as well as request other STCs with selected PMCs or PMSs to participate in biomass.
- 4) Action Item – Rick White assemble a team by May 30 to work through the logistics of preparing a proposal for the 2004 solicitation.
- 5) Action Item – Rick White work with Gayle Norman to determine if PM is eligible as a research agency to participate in this proposal.

Comments from Merlin Bartz

- 1) 2002 Farm Bill
 - a) 80% overall increase in funding level for conservation
 - b) New emphasis is on working lands, including animal waste issues, carbon sequestration and biomass/ bioenergy issues
 - c) Energy title of Farm Bill offers new directions for US Ag. Funds \$75M for biomass research from 2002-2007. Offers legislation for farmers to use and produce energy more efficiently. This is in cooperation with Department of Energy.
- 2) Healthy Forests Initiatives
 - a) Geared towards state forest work
 - b) Can deal with invasive species and rehabilitation of forest lands
 - c) President strongly supports healthy initiative to support national fire strategy.
 - i) More wildland-urban interface which puts forth its own challenges with fire strategies
 - ii) Costs of wildland fires are astronomical when you consider loss of wildlife and fish habitat, erosion, sterile soils, etc.
- 3) Role of PM
 - a) President has made a special request (Feb 2002) to Secretary Veneman to make efforts in carbon sequestration

- b) NRCS needs to recognize internal programs, such as PM, dealing with energy provisions and make those better known to department when opportunities arise.
- c) PM is uniquely geared to address many of the President's initiatives and strategies for energy and healthy forests
- d) Conversations need to happen between NRCS and Forest Service about cooperative work
- e) PM needs to market its tie-in to key initiatives

Comments from Humberto Hernandez

- 1) PM is such an integral part of NRCS operations
- 2) There has been a shift in emphasis on PM in that many STCs are not as aware of the program and PM is not in employee development plans for FO staff.
- 3) Humberto will attend future NPMAC meetings given enough notice.

Marketing efforts (Holzworth)

- 1) Overview of marketing efforts and emphasis on key audiences presented
- 2) Marketing Plan – group agreed that Marketing Plan is final.
- 3) E-newsletter
 - a) Mar/Apr issue distributed
 - b) Purpose is to reach key audiences and diverse group and provide information to them quickly which is easy to understand; PM can provide solutions to critical resource issues
 - c) Upcoming issues – Louisiana coastal restoration; drought; biomass-bioenergy
 - d) How do we better market the eNewsletter?
 - i) Jody has submitted short articles to NACD, others to publish in their newsletters to let people know the newsletter is available
 - ii) NPMAC promote eNewsletter to STCs to encourage them to pass on to key audiences
 - (1) **Action Item** - Niles will send out letter to all STCs (drafted by Jody), when the next newsletter is issued, encouraging them to pass on the newsletter to key audiences.
 - iii) Suggestions: include text to make sure the reader knows there are 26 PMCs serving 50 states and territories; also mentioned this is distributed 6x per year with features from various regions each time. Include information on the picture used in the header.
- 4) Brochure – draft distributed
 - a) **Action Item** – NPMAC provide comments on brochure back to Jody no later than May 15.
 - b) Suggestion: make it 8.5 x 3.3 folded to fit into a pocket.
- 5) Farm Bill Fact Sheet – draft distributed
 - a) **Action Item** – NPMAC provide comments on Farm Bill Fact Sheet back to Jody no later than May 15.
 - b) Need to think about sending this out electronically; try to piggy back on electronic NetMeeting Farm Bill training which is going to happen (contact Carol Jett); also include on Farm Bill fact sheet Web site

State Plant Materials Coordinators (White)

- 1) Proposal - For states without PMCs or PMSs, identify a state plant materials coordinator and/or committee to help coordinate plant materials efforts.

- 2) Suggestions:
 - a) Maybe STCs just need a reminder of the policy which is place – need a bulletin
 - b) Organize committees based on the service areas instead of just individual states; i.e., have one DC or state rep from non-PMC states sit on one committee to serve as liaisons to the PMC.
 - c) Identify one plant materials contact for each state
 - d) Need to involve Regional Technology Specialists on state committees and on the NPMAC
- 3) **Action Item** – Rick White have bulletin issued reminding STCs of need for State Plant Materials Committees and to identify one plant materials contact per state
- 4) **Action item** – Humberto Hernandez remind RCs at their next meeting of the need for State Plant Materials Committees

Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) (White)

- 1) An overview of PART and its significance was presented – PART is an OMB Assessment of government programs to determine effectiveness, which may serve as the basis for future funding for the program.
- 2) **Action Item** – NPMAC provide feedback on PART detailed answers to John Englert by May 15.

Meetings with Seed Trade Associations (White)

- 1) Native Seed Trade Association (NTSA)
 - a) Group led by Dawn Southard
 - b) Overview of PM given and was well received by members
- 2) American Seed Trade Association
 - a) 25-30 native seed growers were in attendance along with CEO and other staff of ASTA
 - b) presentations given on the PM Program and how we fit into activities with seed growers
 - c) Chief Knight and Secretary Veneman both talked with the group
 - d) ASTA is interested in establishing a MOU with NRCS/PM to promote closer ties and activities between the two groups
 - e) Agreement was made to have joint meetings yearly to discuss activities.
 - f) Suggestion: have additional contact with ASTA on a more regular basis
 - g) **Action Item** - Have Jody work with ASTA's communication staff to find out what their information needs are. Also see if we can display PM exhibit and/or make a presentation at their national meeting.

Proposed New PMCs (White)

- 1) Nevada – John McLain and BLM have been promoting a PMC in Nevada to meet needs of that state. University has agreed to donate 120 acres for PMC use in Fallon, NV. Congressional staff is looking at a potential earmark to make this happen.
- 2) New York Urban PMC – discussions are very early in the cycle. Nature Conservancy is promoting and supporting this. Some congressional support is being lined up.

Plant Materials Web site (Englert)

- 1) Status of web site – no web designer at this time due to hiring freezes in effect, need to redesign web site to meet current NRCS web modernization initiatives

- 2) Current effort with NPDC to provide a search function on the web for PM publications. This will greatly increase access and usage of PM information.

Foundation Seed Quality and Long Term Seed Storage (Englert)

- 1) Seed storage – OIG identified a deficiency in getting some PM releases into the National Plant Germplasm System (NPGS). National PMC has surveyed all releases in the NPGS and distributed reports to PMCs. National PMC will be working with NPGS to identify a mechanism to submit seed to NPGS curators or National Seed Storage Lab.
 - a) Other issues – Some NPGS curators have expressed an interest in obtaining samples from PMCs from base collections. We need to develop a mechanism to put this into place.
- 2) Foundation Seed Quality
 - a) Issues – As resources become limited at PMCs it is becoming more difficult to maintain the quality of breeder and foundation seed fields. Though this problem has not reached critical levels yet, if the current trend continues there could be serious problems within the next 2-4 years at some PMCs.
 - b) Action Items – Rick White/ John Englert – have NPM Technical Committee explore what the extent of the problem is or when it will be a problem, and provide alternatives and recommendations for courses of action.

Plant Materials Laboratories (Englert)

- 1) Background: Four PMC laboratories were started in the early 1990s to address water analysis, tissue analysis, tissue culture, and seed germination testing needs by PMCs. A report prepared by Joel Douglas summarized the current status of PMC laboratories and the costs and benefits associated with successful laboratories.
- 2) Suggestion: Need to look at competitive sourcing initiatives – can the PMCs provide a service to both PMCs and other government agencies at a reduced cost. This could also work in reverse where PMCs contract outsource to other government agencies.
- 3) Action Item – Rick White/ John Englert – Have NPM Technical Committee do a cost analysis and compare the cost of doing this from PMCs versus the cost to outsource.

Future Action Items

Name	Action Item Description	Status
Action Items brought forward from previous meetings		
Rick White/ John Englert	prepare letter to send to STCs with copy to PMCs/PMSs asking for contacts and supporters for the PMC program	Progress stalled, NPM Technical Committee will call PMCs and PMSs in their regions to collect this data.
Rick White	Send memo out to all PM staff letting them know that if deadlines for information are not met the STC will be contacted directly.	No progress
Jody Holzworth/ John Englert	Prepare Farm Bill fact sheet for internal NRCS use to describe how PM can help FOs work on Farm Bill.	DONE – will be distributed with next issue of Plants: A Growing Alternative newsletter
Rick White	The request for annual performance goals should be sent to STCs with a cc: to PMCs in the future.	Future item – September 2003
New Action Items		
Humberto Hernandez	Remind RCs at their next meeting of the need for state plant materials committees and to involve Regional Technology Specialists in PM committees and activities	
Humberto Hernandez	Will follow-up with people on invasive species issues and NH Biologist	
Humberto Hernandez	Will talk with Roger Hansen about participation and will discuss with Larry Clark issues with east region rep. Also discuss with Rick VanKlavern about replacement for Tom Jewett.	Ron Williams replaced Roger Hansen as Midwest Region representative on committee
Jody Holzworth	Work with American Seed Trade Association's communication staff to find out what their information needs are. Also see if we can display PM exhibit and/or make a presentation at their national meeting in June.	
Niles Glasgow	Send out letter to all STCs (drafted by Jody), when the next eNewsletter is issued, encouraging them to pass on the newsletter to key audiences	
Niles Glasgow/ Leonard Jordan	Prepare letter to Ron Williams to request Dave Burgdorf take lead on Biomass proposal as well as request other STCs with selected PMCs or PMSs to participate in biomass	
NPMAC	Provide comments on Farm Bill fact sheet back to Jody no later than May 15	DONE – deadline has passed

Name	Action Item Description	Status
NPMAC	Provide comments on PM brochure back to Jody no later than May 15	DONE – deadline has passed
NPMAC	Provide comments on training session materials back to Jim Briggs by May 2	DONE – deadline has passed
Rick White	Assemble a team by May 30 to work through the logistics of preparing a biomass proposal for the 2004 solicitation	
Rick White	Work with Gayle Norman to determine if PM is eligible as a research agency to participate in the biomass proposal	PM dies conduct research; need formal letter
Rick White	Have bulletin issued reminding STCs of need for State Plant Materials Committees and to identify one plant materials contact per state	
Rick White/ John Englert	Have NPM Technical Committee do a cost analysis and compare the cost of doing this from PMCs versus the cost to outsource	Will be discussed at NPM Technical Committee meeting July 29-31